

Use of Medication Aides in Nursing Homes - HB 377

Questions and Answers

Q: Who served on the HJR 17 work group that studied medication aides and made the recommendations found in HB 377?

A: The work group included:
Rep. Julie French (D-Scobey), sponsor of HJR 17
Montana Health Care Association - Rose Hughes, Executive Director
Montana Hospital Association - Casey Blumenthal, MHSA, RN, CAE
Montana Board of Nursing - Ms. Kathy Hayden, LPN, President
Montana Nurses Association - Mr. Robert Allen
St. John's Lutheran Ministries, Billings - Libby Markus, RN
Valley View Home, Glasgow - Lori Collins, RN
Madison Valley Manor, Ennis - Judy Melin, RN, LNHA

Q: Who supported HB 377 when it was heard in the House Human Services Committee?

A: The following individuals testified or had statements put into the record:
Montana Health Care Association - Rose Hughes, Executive Director
Montana Nurses Association - Barbara Swehla, RN
Montana Hospital Association - Casey Blumenthal, RN
Sage Company, Missoula - Denise Licata, RN
Benefis Health System, Great Falls - Frank Soltys, LNHA
Billings Clinic / Aspen Meadows, Billings - Amy Grmoliez
St. John's Lutheran Ministries, Billings - Libby Markus, RN
Valley View Home, Glasgow - Lori Collins, RN
Northern Montana Care Center, Havre - Lori Henderson, RN, LNHA
Eagle Cliff Manor, Billings - Brian Huso, LNHA

Q: Who opposed HB 377 when it was heard in the House Human Services Committee?

A: There were no opponents

WE URGE YOU TO SUPPORT THIS LEGISLATION.

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MEDICATION AIDES are used in about 30 states and are specially trained individuals who are allowed to administer medications in nursing homes and other settings specified by the individual states.

In Montana, medication aides are allowed to administer medications in assisted living facilities.

THIS LEGISLATION authorizes the use of medication aides in nursing homes and establishes the qualifications, training, testing, scope of practice, limitations and supervision required. These individuals will be licensed by the Board of Nursing.

KEY PROVISIONS INCLUDE:

- must be a certified nursing assistant (CNA) with at least 2 years experience
- must successfully complete 100 hours of education related to basic pharmacology and principles of safe medication administration and pass a board-approved examination
- must practice under the supervision of a licensed nurse

RESTRICTIONS INCLUDE:

- may not administer "as needed" medications
- may not administer parenteral or subcutaneous medications except for prelabeled, predrawn insulin; and may not administer medications through nasogastric routes or by gastrostomy or jejunostomy tubes
- may not calculate dosages or take verbal orders related to changes in medications and dosages

HJ 17 passed by the 2009 legislature requested DPHHS and the Department of Commerce to conduct a study to examine the use of medication aides in nursing homes and to develop a report for the 2011 legislature that would discuss all provisions necessary for the safe and effective use of medication aides in nursing homes. This legislation embodies the recommendation of the study group.

Our nursing homes are experiencing a shortage of licensed nursing staff, particularly in our most rural communities. Facilities are forced to use agencies who supply traveling nurses to staff uncovered shifts. This is not only expensive but affects the quality of care because residents are being cared for by nurses who are not familiar with them. The shortage will only worsen as the baby boomers continue to age and seek health care services.

We believe the use of medication aides in nursing homes will be beneficial in Montana by taking pressure off licensed nurses to allow more time for assessment and other complex nursing functions, by having medication aides who know the residents administer medications instead of traveling nurses who are not familiar with residents, and by improving retention and recruitment of CNA's through a career ladder approach.

WE URGE YOU TO SUPPORT THIS LEGISLATION.

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